

PROGRESSIONS

Issue 2

Summer 2004

UPCOMING MEETINGS

August 18
5:30-7:30 p.m.
Alvin Community College
Nolan Ryan Center
2925 South Bypass 35
Alvin, Texas

August 19
5:30-7:30 p.m.
Hilton Houston-Hobby Airport
8181 Airport Blvd.
Houston, Texas

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- Public Involvement
- Corridor Study Area Map

INTRODUCTION

The Houston District of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is continuing a Major Corridor Feasibility Study (MCFS) for an approximate 47-mile segment of SH 35, located in Harris and Brazoria Counties, from IH 45 in downtown Houston to SH 288 in the City of Angleton. Cities and communities along the corridor include Houston, Brookside Village, Friendswood, Pearland, Alvin, and Angleton. The study is expected to conclude in June 2005.

STUDY TEAM

TxDOT-Houston has chosen a team of professional engineering, environmental, and public involvement consultants to perform the study. Team members include:

URS Corporation – Prime consultant. Project oversight, engineering, and environmental analysis

AIA Engineering – Hydraulic and hydrologic evaluation

Gunda Corporation – Traffic/transportation analysis

The Lentz Group – Public involvement

FIRST PUBLIC MEETING SERIES

On January 13-14, 2004, TxDOT held the first series of public meetings for the SH 35 MCFS at the Nolan Ryan Center in Alvin and the Hilton-Hobby Airport in Houston. Using detailed corridor maps and informational boards, TxDOT and study team representatives introduced the project to the 148 citizens who attended the open house meetings.

A primary goal of the meeting series was to obtain the public's suggestions on how the

SH 35 corridor could be improved. A total of 104 written questionnaires were received. The majority of respondents thought upgrading/repairing the existing infrastructure (60%) and constructing new lanes on existing roadways (57%) would be the most beneficial improvements to the SH 35 corridor. Other suggestions for the corridor included adding turn lanes, signal synchronization, adding overpasses, implementing congestion management strategies, and completing the Alvin bypass.



STUDY PROCESS CONTINUES

The study team is currently in the process of identifying and evaluating transportation alternatives. Using the input from the public and the Steering and Advisory Committees and data collected during the first phase of the project, the team designated these goals for the corridor:

- Improve safety for the traveling public
- Improve North/South mobility
- Preserve and enhance social/community and economic viability
- Protect the natural environment
- Improve transportation infrastructure
- Provide a multi-modal transportation system

Based on these goals, the team developed a multi-modal "universe" of all possible transportation alternatives, incorporating various types of improvements including transit and non-motorized transportation options, roadway improvements, new roadway alignments, and applying transportation system management and travel demand management (TSM/TDM) strategies such as signal upgrades, adding grade separations and turn lanes, and congestion management strategies.

During the transportation alternative development process, the study area was expanded westward to encompass the full geographic area that could be transversed by the universe of alternatives. This allowed the study team to identify land uses and constraints in the expanded study area and to thoroughly examine the benefits and impacts of the alternatives. A revised study area map is included in this newsletter.

As the study progresses, the multi-modal alternatives will undergo a qualitative screening that will evaluate the effect of each alternative based on study goals and screening criteria. The list will then be narrowed to the most "viable" alternatives. This short list of alternatives will be analyzed further and ranked based on criteria such as mobility, social, economic, environmental, and hydraulic impacts; the effectiveness and cost-benefit of alternatives; and abilities to attain local, state, and national goals. The alternative that demonstrates the best performance based on the project goals will become the "Recommended Preferred" Alternative. At the study's end, a final report documenting the study's process and results will be produced.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Regular, ongoing communication with area officials and members of the community is an essential part of the study process. The comprehensive public involvement plan includes:

Steering Committee. Established to offer policy decisions and to guide the technical development of the study. Committee representatives are from TxDOT, Houston Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transportation Agency (FTA), Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Harris and Brazoria Counties, and the Cities of Houston, Pearland, Brookside Village, Hillcrest Village, Danbury, Alvin, Manvel, and Angleton.

Advisory Committee. Organized as a stakeholder group to elicit broad-based involvement in the study. The committee is composed of area cities, economic development associations, civic clubs, and other local stakeholders and will meet periodically throughout the course of the study to give the project team specific input and guidance regarding the area's needs.

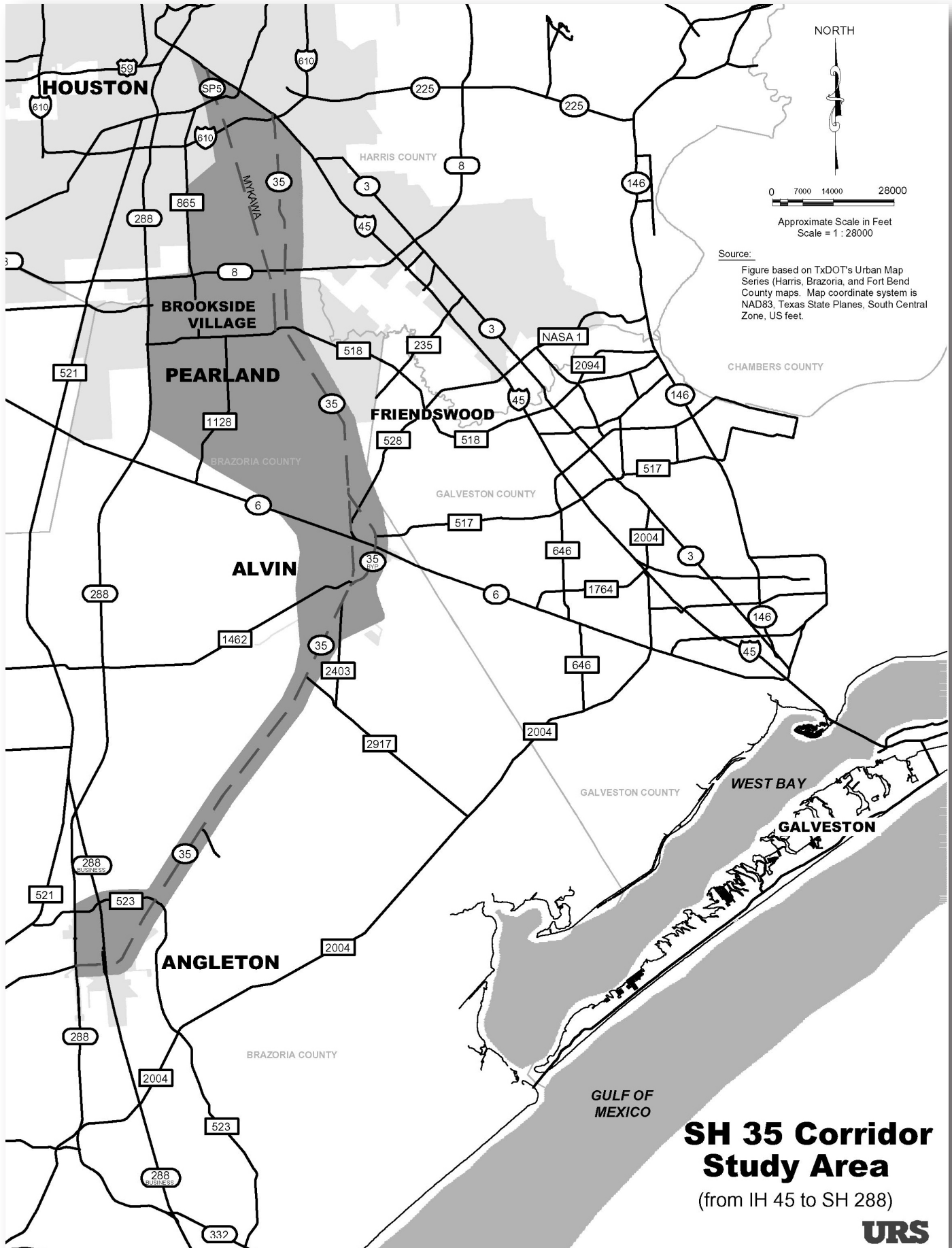
Public Meetings – A series of three public meeting rounds – each conducted in workshop format and held at two locations within the study area – and a public hearing will be held to update you on the study's progress and provide a forum for your comments and concerns. Attendees will be able to engage in informal discussions with study team members, view project information, and provide valuable feedback for the study. Public meetings are anticipated as follows:

- **January 13-14, 2004** – Topic: Study Purpose, Process Goals, and Objectives (See Page 1 for summary)
- **August 18-19, 2004** – Topic: Development of Transportation Alternatives (See back panel for details)
- **Winter 2005 Public Meeting** – Topic: Recommendation of Preferred Alternative
- **Spring 2005 Public Hearing** – Topic: Presentation of Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Newsletters. Newsletters will be prepared and mailed during the course of the study as appropriate to update you on the project and provide notification for upcoming public meetings. The final newsletter will contain a summary of the study's results.

Written Comments. Written comments are welcome and encouraged at any time during the study. You may submit comments at public meetings or via mail to: Mr. Pat Henry, P.E., Director of Project Development, TxDOT, P.O. Box 1386, Houston, Texas 77251-1386.

Website. At www.dot.state.tx.us, look for SH 35 under Transportation Studies to view the latest newsletter and get up-to-date information on public meeting schedules and locations.





UPCOMING MEETINGS

We encourage your attendance at this second round of public meetings for the SH 35 Major Corridor Feasibility Study. The purpose of the meetings is to present and discuss the transportation alternatives being developed for the study area and to gather input for the development of the SH 35 Environmental Impact Statement.

The meetings will be conducted in open house format and the public is invited to attend any time between the hours posted below. Attendees will be able to review large-scale maps and other exhibits at their leisure and engage in informal discussions with TxDOT and study team representatives. For your convenience, meetings are being held on two dates at two different locations within the corridor:

□	Wednesday, August 18, 5:30-7:30 p.m.	Thursday, August 19, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
□	Alvin Community College	Hilton Houston-Hobby Airport
□	Nolan Ryan Center	Ballroom C
□	2925 South Bypass 35	8181 Airport Boulevard
□	Alvin, Texas 77511	Houston, Texas 77061

The meetings are being held in handicap accessible locations and will be conducted in English. Persons with special communication or physical accommodation needs should contact TxDOT's public affairs office at 713/802-5072 at least 48 hours prior to the meetings. Reasonable accommodations will be made to meet these needs. Written comments may be submitted via mail to Mr. Pat Henry, P.E., Director of Project Development, TxDOT, P.O. Box 1386, Houston, Texas 77251-1386.



c/o The Lentz Group
2600 Citadel Plaza Drive
Suite 115
Houston, Texas 77008

